



Members of the Rocky Mountain Mule Association guide mules carrying lumber for bridges and walkways along the Highline Trail in the High Uintas.

Mules rule in the Uintas

County Goes Hunting for a Water Czar

TIM WESTBY
COURIER STAFF

With continued strong growth and growing water woes, Wasatch County is looking for the equivalent of a water czar to oversee the county's water resources.

According to the county's job description, the new water resources coordinator will oversee all of the county's water resource activities. As a result, says one county commissioner, the county will not have to hire outside water specialists or attorneys when problems arise.

"We need someone to make sure that we are making the best use of the water we have," County Commissioner Mike Kohler said. "This guy will pay for himself many times over."

Kohler says one of the most important jobs of the new person will be to

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work with the planning department to confirm that the claims made by developers about the amount of water available for new projects.

Other duties for the \$46,000 to \$50,000 a year position, include administering the county's proportion of the Central

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Utah Project, direct all water resource activities of Service Area #1, coordinating the county's restoration work on the Provo River, and working the

irrigation companies. The job description calls for someone with a background in water resources, land planning, administrative functions and "above average management, negotiation, and organizational skills."

"I think he will turn out to be one of the most valuable people in the county," says Kohler.

JEFFREY D. ALBERT/DESERT NEWS

Stubborn critters win the hearts of their handlers

By Gib Twyman
Deseret News staff writer

8-6-00

HIGHLINE TRAIL, High Uintas — You don't really command a mule to do anything. More like a delicate peace treaty, you enter into sensitive negotiations with the beast.

"They are first, foremost and always going to satisfy the most important things in their lives — themselves," Ron Woolsey, Spanish Fork, said early Friday, wrestling a saddle blanket onto his willful buddy, Boo-Boo, one of the estimated 40 to 50 mules packing in timber to repair bridges and trails in this area a short clip and a clop from Mirror Lake.

"They make up their minds what's gonna happen next, not

you," said Steve Hamilton, Sandy, a member of the Rocky Mountain Mule Association,

which undertook the effort of hauling hundreds of pounds of wood into the backcountry as a service project in cooperation with the Kamas Ranger Station.

"If you win 51 percent of the time, that's what I call winning with a mule," Hamilton said.

That said, why fool with a mule to do your heavy lifting?

"Well, first off, maybe you're just different, because a mule definitely is a different critter,"

said Lars Woolsey, Payson. Ron Woolsey's father.

It's also because many a mule skinner has a stubborn streak in himself or herself, too, and they lug around a deep affection for the nobility and savvy they see in the pointy-eared varmints.



J.R. Johnson looks the part of a mule skinner as he helps deliver lumber.

"If a mule doesn't want to do something, forget it; you might as well give up. But if you can get him to do something of his own free will,

you've got the best working animal you can have," Lars Woolsey said.

"A mule is made of tough stuff. He's more sure-footed, a better athlete and more durable than a horse," said Ron Woolsey.

"He will get up and work hard for you every single day," Hamilton said.

"A mule is much smarter than a horse," said Roger Ward, Sandy, president and charter member of the 12-year-old mule association.

"Oh, by far," chorused the circle of mule-o-philes, looking up from sorting tack.

"A mule will question where he's going, and that's a good thing," said Art Johnson, American Fork, fixing a two-horn saddle and "britchins" across the hindquarters on one of three mules he'd brought for the occasion, Molybdenum ("I call him that because they use molybdenum to make steel, and he's tough as steel").

"A mule is sensible when he gets into a tight situation. He's

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much calmer than a horse and won't panic to get out of it," Johnson said.

"Plus they're browsers, they'll feed on leaves, bark, most anything," said Bill Knight, saddling Myrtle and Jerry.

"I once had a guy tell me he could put his mule in a parking lot and he'd gain weight," added Johnson. "They definitely are not picky eaters."

"And," said Ron Woolsey, "with that tough black hoof, you don't have to shoe 'em, unless you're working 'em on rocks for several days in a row. Saves you lots of money."

"On top of everything, you just enjoy them for the ride," said Chad Carter, Spanish Fork. "They're a lot easier on you than a horse. The mule is the Cadillac of the equine world."

No one had to sell Patti Ward, Roger Ward's wife, on those qualities.

She became a confirmed mule-backer on a trail ride down around Lake Powell 10 years ago. She was seven months pregnant with her daughter, Amber Lee, on horseback, looking down at sheer drop-offs to one side.

"I said I needed a way to get me the heck off that mountain. They put me on a mule — Hooter, I believe, was the name. When we made it back home, the first thing we did was get a mule. Now that's all we have," said Patti Ward, helping get John Henry, Gus, Festus, Bo and Daisy rigged out for the pack.

Few people were happier to see the gathering of mule flesh than Barb Walker, a volunteer coordina-

tor for the Kamas Ranger Station, who was helping plan the new "corduroy patterned" boardwalk back along the Highline Trail.

"They approached us because they wanted to do something to help. I don't know how we'd get the wood back there without them. It would take almost all the funding we have to do it otherwise and be 10 times as much work," Walker said.

"What they're doing is fabulous for saving and repairing the trail. Without this, people will try to avoid walking through the mud and wet and fan out marking new trails," said Matt Yurick, forest technician with the Kamas Ranger Station. "This really helps save the forest."

With all this do-gooding, how did mules get such a bad rep?

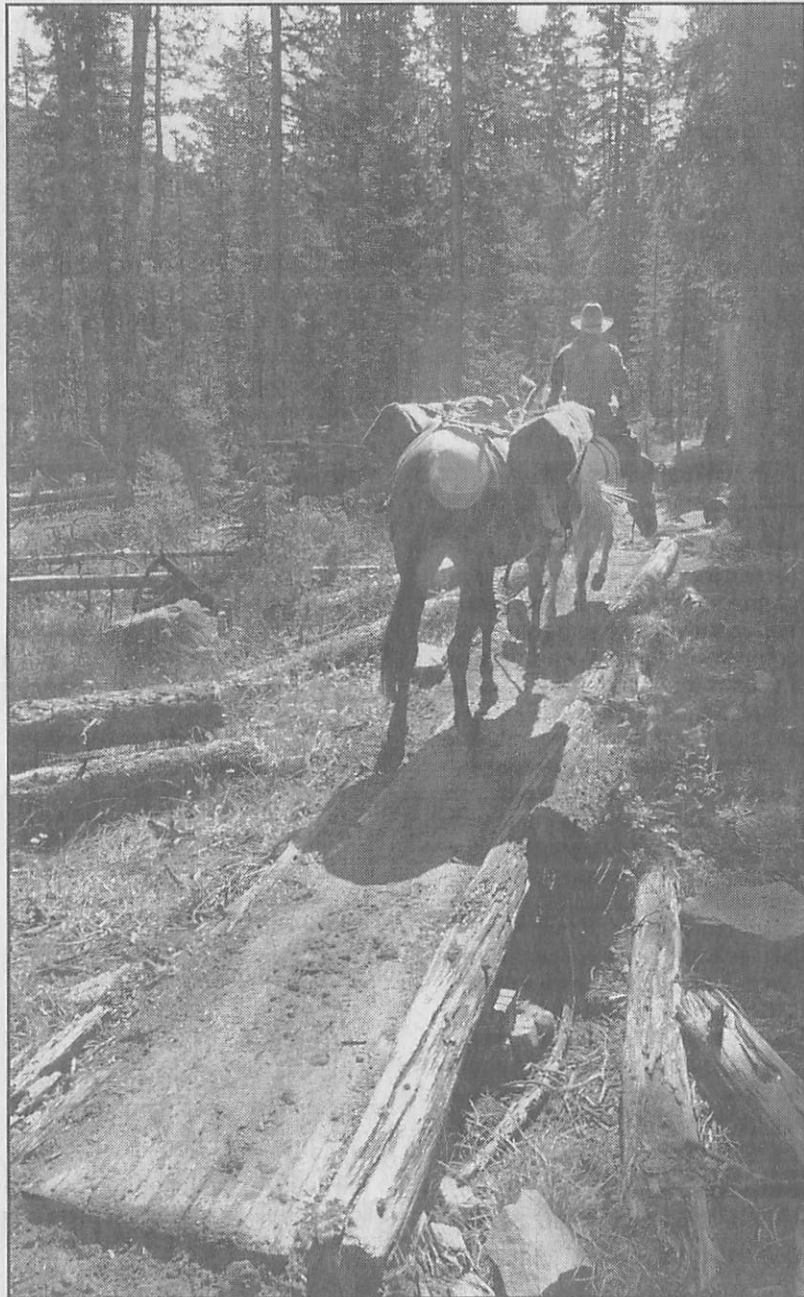
Partly that comes from the past practice of indiscriminate pairings of jackass donkeys and horses to produce a mule (a Molly for a girl mule, John for a boy mule).

"Mules have been fairly well misunderstood because people used to take any old jack and breed it to any old mare," Johnson said. "You'd get these cantankerous, don't-want-to-do-anything-you-tell-me mules. Now we look for calmer, more willing mares and breed them with jacks who show they're easier to work with."

"Now if you had to sum up a mule in three words, they would be endurance, loving and smart," Knight said.

With that, about 30 of the critters lit out into the Uintas, still somewhat single-minded, perhaps, but in single file, still heeding an ancient call, even if they are the new generation of kinder, gentler Johns and Mollies.

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Mules are more sure-footed than horses on walkways, mule skinnners say.

arrested inside the Foxwoods Resort Casino with the corneas, which belonged to the New England Eye & Tissue Transplant Bank in Boston. Police said they had been stolen from a bus station in Boston along with the donor's medical records, which also were recovered.

Dellaria told state police that he thought the plastic foam package holding the corneas on ice was holding with lobsters, State police Detective Jeff Megin said. The package was about the size of a 12-pack beer container.

Storm Alberto weakens during shift to cooler waters

MIAMI (Reuters)—Tropical Storm Alberto, the first of the 2000 Atlantic hurricane season, weakened Saturday as it moved over cooler waters off the coast of Africa but could intensify within days, the U.S. National Hurricane Center said.

"If it continues on this path, it will still be another five days before it will be anywhere near the Caribbean," said Lixion Avila, forecaster at the National Hurricane Center. "But the chances of intensification increase as it moves over warmer waters in the Caribbean."

National Hurricane Center forecasters said as of 10 a.m. EDT Alberto was not strengthening. The storm's center was located about 430 miles west of the southernmost point of the Cape Verde Islands off the west coast of Africa at latitude 14.4 north and longitude 30.7 west.

NAACP moving convention to protest S.C. flag decision

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP)—The NAACP is moving its annual state

convention out of South Carolina to protest the state's decision to continue to fly the Confederate battle flag on Statehouse grounds.

James Gallman, president of the NAACP's South Carolina conference of branches, said the decision by lawmakers to move the flag to a Confederate Soldier Monument after bringing it down from the Capitol dome was insulting.

"Until the Confederate battle flag is finally removed from all positions of sovereignty in South Carolina, we will not host any conventions in the state of South Carolina," Gallman said.

The NAACP announced Friday it would move the October convention to Charlotte, N.C. The convention, which attracts up to 1,000 delegates, was also moved from South Carolina to Charlotte last year.

Ex-L.A. officer admits lying about 1995 arrest

LOS ANGELES (AP)—In a case predating the city's police corruption scandal, a former officer pleaded guilty to violating the civil rights of a man he falsely reported tried to hide a gun during a burglary investigation.

Edward Patrick Ruiz, 36, admitted Friday he lied to a supervising officer about the 1995 arrest of a suspect he said he saw throwing away a weapon, and submitted a false report.

Ruiz, who resigned Thursday, faces up to 10 years in prison when he is sentenced Jan. 22. He is free on bail.

Former Officer Jon Paul Taylor is scheduled for trial Sept. 12 on charges of conspiring to violate Victor Tyson's civil rights. If convicted, he faces up to 11 years in prison.

Tyson was tried on a misdemeanor charge of carrying a concealed weapon, but his case was dismissed before a verdict was rendered. Prosecutors sought the dismissal after discovering inconsistencies in the officers' testimony.

The case occurred before the scandal involving the department's Rampart station came to light. Ruiz and Taylor worked out of the department's 77th Division station.

Fire in bell tower guts historic Texas courthouse

BEAUMONT, Texas (AP)—A fire that started in the bell tower destroyed a nearly 100-year-old courthouse just as the county was preparing to repair it with a historical grant from the state.

More than 50 firefighters from nearly a dozen surrounding fire departments battled the flames that consumed the Newton County Courthouse on Friday night.

Crews worked through the night extinguishing hot spots and salvaging county records, which were thought to be safe within a fire-proof vault.

The blaze spread quickly because much of the building was constructed with knotted pine. The cause was not immediately determined.

There was no damage to the jail. However, eight inmates were transferred to another detention center, Sheriff Wayne Powell said.

The courthouse was built in 1903.

Judge OKs \$42 million accord in case against teen slayer

PADUCAH, Ky. (AP)—A judge has signed a settlement for \$42 million in a civil case against the teen-

ager who killed three girls in the Heath High School shootings.

Circuit Judge Will Shadoan said the lawsuit, filed by the victims' parents, was probably the hardest civil case he has faced in 17 years on the bench.

Michael Carneal opened fire in the school's lobby on Dec. 1, 1997.

His attorneys offered to settle, and on Thursday the plaintiffs issued a statement saying the families of Jessica James, Kayce Steger and Nicole Hadley had accepted. Five other students were wounded.

"I've had some pretty nasty cases," the judge said. "It's rough when you've had children who were killed or destroyed as the Carneal boy was."

The judgment means the civil trial scheduled to start Monday will not take place. It's doubtful the victims' families will collect the judgment because Carneal, 16, has no assets and will be in prison until at least 2022.

Mom-in-law agrees to allow O.J. to move with kids

SANTA ANA, Calif. (AP)—The mother of Nicole Brown Simpson has agreed to allow O.J. Simpson to move to Florida with his children.

Simpson is expected to move later this month with Sydney, 14, and Justin, 12, who have spent two months with the Browns this summer. The children of Simpson and his slain ex-wife urged their grandmother to let them go with him, said Jonathan Burrington, a spokesman for the Browns.

"The children said to their grandmother, 'I want to be with my father,'" Burrington said. "It signals a truce for the time being. The Browns are going to allow the children to go to Florida and play it by ear."